

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 04078 101304Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 SS-15 INR-07 NSC-05 CIAE-00 SP-02
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R 101216Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2053
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 4078

E.O. 11652: 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EG, ET
SUBJECT: CAIRO PRESS ON DEFECTIONS OF ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS

REF: STATE 048415 (EXDIS) (NOTAL)

1. AKHBAR MARCH 10 CARRIES FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE NOTING THAT ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO GETACHEW MEKASHA "DISAPPEARED" DURING PAST WEEK AND LEFT CAIRO WITH WIFE FOR AMERICA. ARTICLE GOES ON TO NOTE THAT ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TO FRG, A SCHOOL COLLEAGUE OF GETACHEW, HAS ALSO DISAPPEARED, WHILE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TO RABAT HAS ASKED FOR ASYLUM IN MOROCCO AND ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TO TOKYO SEEKING POLITICAL ASYLUM IN UNITED STATES. AKHBAR DULY NOTES COMMENT BY ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION LEADER TO AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT BERHAN LINKA (FROM ARABIC), CHIEF OF AFRICAN DEPT. OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, THAT HE HAS NOT SEEN GETACHEW SINCE MARCH 2, ALTHOUGH AKHBAR MERCIFULLY LEAVES OUT BERHAN PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT, REPORTED TO US BY LOCAL JOURNALISTS, THAT GETACHEW BACK IN ADDIS ABABA ON CONSULTATIONS

2. IN EFFORT TO BE FAIR, AKHBAR ALSO CARRIES, ON INSIDE PAGES, STATEMENT BY BERHAN THAT NO ISRAELI BASES EXIST IN ETHIOPIA
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ALONG RED SEA COAST. BERHAN MANFULLY PRAISED EGYPTIAN-SUDANESE-SYRIAN EFFORTS TO BRING PEACE TO RED SEA, BUT POINTED OUT THAT ETHIOPIA MUST ASSIST IN THESE EFFORTS.

3. COMMENT: AS DEPT AWARE FORMER AMBASSADOR MEKASHA IS IN FACT IN U.S. WHERE HIS CHILDREN ARE STUDYING. RUMORS CONCERNING ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN CIRCULATING DURING AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT AND PROBABLY

DID NOT REACH PRINT EARLIER IN DEFERENCE TO FRATERNAL AFRO-ARAB SPIRIT. AKHBAR VERSION QUITE LOW-KEY AND DOES NOT MAKE ANY MENTION OF EARLIER DEFECTION OF FONMIN KIFLE OR EPMG ACTIONS WHICH CAUSING DEFECTIONS. ELF MEMBERS WERE LOBBYING HARD IN SUMMIT CORRIDORS, ALTHOUGH NO OFFICIAL OR PRESS MENTION WAS MADE OF ELF EFFORTS. LOW-LEVEL ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION MUST HAVE FELT ON DEFENSIVE THROUGHOUT PROCEEDINGS.
MATTHEWS

NOTE BY OC/T: DISTRIBUTION COORDINATED WITH MR. STEINER S/S-O.

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